

International Peace Day Commemorated in Aruba



About one-hundred students from two elementary schools, Pieter Boer in San Nicolas and Pius X in Oranjestad, were guests of Fundacion Respeta Bida, Semper Corda, at Wilhelmina Park in the gardens surrounding the Anne Frank's statue. The purpose of the gathering was to educate students on the significance of peace and to make them part of a constructive community that builds a better future for Aruba.

Foundation President Diana Pieters-Gonzalez, welcomed the students on behalf of the foundation explaining the foundation promotes respect for all people and wishes for all human-beings to be living in peace across cultures, religions, nationalities and ways of thinking. She reiterated that children are the future of the island and that Aruba will become a reflection of its younger generation. On the International Day of Peace the gathering at the Anne Frank statue reminded everyone that while Aruba never knew war, the island is still familiar with fighting between people, and exchanges of harsh words, leading to the conclusion that peace begins at home, with mutual love and appreciation. "Start living in peace at home, with your family members and friends, at school, in your daily life, and you will contribute to a better world," Pieters advised.

Musical director Maybeline Arends-Croes and her choir of lovely singers gave an excel-

lent presentation of We Are the World, followed by Een Beetje Vrede and Que Canten Los Ninos, in three languages symbolizing Aruba's multi-linguistic culture.

The children also helped plant a Carob tree, and an Olive tree, a symbol of peace, both sent from Israel to Aruba in order to be planted on the International Peace Day tribute.

A dramatic folk-story telling followed by a talented youth duo under the direction of Desiree Correa and Munye Oduber Winklaar, just before the group was invited to the Renaissance Convention Center where it created a Peace Tree, hanging with paper Peace Doves.

A number of children were escorted by Diana Pieters to the office of Aruba's Prime Minister, Mike Eman, across the way to deliver letters they wrote, brimming with their suggestions on how to improve the world in general and Aruba in particular. Several letters also went to other government dignitaries, organizations and groups, with concerns about the environment, suggestions for living in harmony, proposals for conservation projects and other concerns children had regarding respect and tolerance.

The event concluded with refreshments. Each child received a special commemorative tee shirt and a booklet, with the lyrics of the songs they've learned.